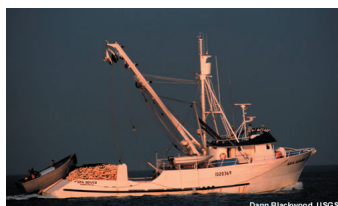
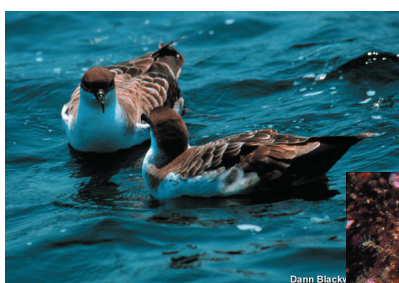


National Marine Sanctuary Program Sanctuary Advisory Council National Annual Report 2005



May 2006
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Ocean Service
National Marine Sanctuary Program





About This Document

This national report is intended to provide a brief introduction to sanctuary advisory councils, describe national level council activities for 2005, and summarize the 2006 Annual Sanctuary Advisory Council Chairs and Coordinators Meeting. The report also highlights each council including: a site profile; council profile; major achievements and milestones; council recommendations; sanctuary decisions; and major administrative changes.

Comments or questions about the sanctuary advisory councils should be directed to:

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Never doubt that a small group of
thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.
Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead



Executive Summary

The National Marine Sanctuary Program (NMSP) manages the nation's system of national marine sanctuaries. Each sanctuary has established a community-based advisory group called a sanctuary advisory council (council). The councils create a nexus among the sanctuaries, the resources, and the communities. The councils are a critical link to our very important constituents—the American public.

The NMSP councils in 2005 and early 2006 continued to achieve significant accomplishments across the system. In 2005, councils and their working groups and subcommittees donated over 16,000 hours worth more than \$300,000 to the NMSP. This year marks a tremendous milestone: in 2005, councils were established for the *Monitor*, Flower Garden Banks and Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuaries. Every site in the system, including the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve and Proposed Sanctuary, now has a sanctuary advisory council.

Like the sanctuaries themselves, the councils are evolving and maturing. At some sites, councils are tackling new, different, and sometimes more complex issues. At other sites, councils continue to address familiar issues in a dedicated and steadfast fashion. Many of these accomplishments are related to ongoing management plan reviews and a designation, but significant attention has also been given to other issues facing sanctuaries, including water quality protection (Channel Islands), high-speed inter-island ferry (Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale), and fiber optic cables (Olympic Coast).

The sixth annual Sanctuary Advisory Council Chairs and Coordinators Meeting was held in Washington, DC from April 25-27, 2006. The meeting included an informal discussion session with council coordinators from across the NMSP, a similar session for council chairs, and discussions and input from the chairs on national issues including the impacts of acoustics on marine mammals, fishing regulations in marine sanctuaries, and oil and gas and alternative ocean energy development and exploration.

The NMSP is marking over fifteen years of working with these councils with this national annual council report. The NMSP is honored to have such deeply passionate and knowledgeable individuals serving on its councils and looks forward to continuing to serve each and every council in the years to come.

Introduction

The NMSP manages the nation's system of national marine sanctuaries. Established by the National Marine Sanctuaries Act in 1972, the NMSP is marking fifteen years of working with councils with the publication of this national annual council report. The NMSP considers the increasing use and support of councils to be a mark of its continuing evolution as a maturing program. The depth of the NMSP's commitment to councils is embodied in its council policy statement:

The NMSP regards the involvement of communities and the development of a stewardship ethic as vitally important to successfully protect sanctuary resources. One key way the NMSP has achieved this involvement is the formation of councils.

Councils bring together members of a diverse community to provide advice to the sanctuary manager (delegated from the Secretary of Commerce) on the management and protection of the sanctuary, or to assist the NMSP in guiding a proposed site through the designation process.

The NMSP is committed to the full support, utilization, and enhancement of councils at all sanctuaries. In order for councils to achieve their full potential, the NMSP will:

- At each site, provide sufficient support to allow councils to operate efficiently and effectively;
- Provide support and guidance from the national office to help councils operate efficiently and at a basic level of consistency across the system;
- Promote coordination and communication among councils and among sanctuary staff that work closely with councils; and
- Develop training programs appropriate to council officers and members, and sanctuary managers and staff.

There are councils established for each of the thirteen sanctuaries and one proposed site within the NMSP network. Three of the councils were established in 2005 (Table 1).

Table 1: Sanctuary Advisory Councils

Site	Year Council Established	Total # Members	Primary Focus for 2005
Florida Keys	1991	19	Operations; zoning
HI Humpback Whale	1992	31	Operations; super ferry
Stellwagen Bank	1992	21	MPR*
Monterey Bay	1994	24	MPR
Olympic Coast	1995	21	Operations
Thunder Bay	1997	16	Operations
Channel Islands	1998	24	Water quality
Gray's Reef	1999	14	MPR
Northwestern HI	2001	25	Ops; Designation
Gulf of the Farallones	2002	8	MPR
Cordell Bank	2002	13	MPR
Fagatele Bay	2005	10	Operations
Flower Garden Banks	2005	11	MPR
Monitor	2005	11	N/A

*Management Plan Review

Over the last few years, the NMSP has determined there are a number of primary roles councils play:

- Serve as a liaison between the sanctuary and its community, disseminating information about the sanctuary to the various constituencies of members and bringing the concerns of constituents and the public to sanctuary staff;
- Assist in creating a dialogue to examine various sides of an issue and a place for mediation;
- Identify potential partners and constituent groups with which the sanctuary should be working and forge relationships;
- Help identify and resolve issues and conflicts, including emerging issues of which the sanctuary might not be aware;
- Review and provide input on sanctuary plans, proposals, and products, including prioritizing issues;
- Participate in sanctuary events, activities, and programs;
- Provide information to individuals or groups interested in establishing a friends' group or foundation to support a sanctuary and/or help support friends' groups;
- Provide technical and background information on issues facing the sanctuary; and
- Validate the accuracy and quality of information that the sanctuary uses for decision-making purposes.

Sanctuary Advisory Council Highlights for 2005

Sanctuary advisory councils provide advice and expertise to sanctuaries that is extremely valuable. Their unique perspectives provide a broad community view of issues facing the sites. A few of the council accomplishments include:

- The five west coast councils passed resolutions expressing concern about the potential threat of oil and gas exploration activities on national marine sanctuaries as a result of the Energy Policy Act of 2005.
- The Channel Islands council developed an extensive water quality report recommending that the sanctuary, in conjunction with partners, take progressive steps with regard to water quality research, monitoring, regulations, policy issues, education and outreach. This helped inform and ramp up sanctuary efforts to develop a water quality protection program.
- The Florida Keys council called for the establishment of additional Wildlife Management Areas, No Wake, Idle Speed Only areas and the installation of marker buoys.
- The Gray's Reef council made recommendations focused on investigation of a marine research area concept for the sanctuary.
- The Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale council made recommendations concerning minimizing and reducing the risk of vessel collisions with whales in anticipation of the Hawaii Super Ferry beginning high-speed inter-island ferry service in 2007.
- The Stellwagen Bank council's compatibility working group worked to develop a framework to assess and evaluate whether existing or proposed human uses are compatible with the sanctuary's primary objective of resource protection.

In 2005 councils were established for the Monitor, Flower Garden Banks and Fagatele Bay national marine sanctuaries. Every site in the system, including the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve and Proposed Sanctuary, now has an advisory council.

Council coordinators attended training hosted by the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary in Scituate, Massachusetts. The training focused on council performance measures, establishing new councils, and how to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of councils.

Report of 2006 Council Chairs and Coordinators Meeting

The 2006 Sanctuary Advisory Council Chairs and Coordinators Meeting was held in Washington, D.C., hosted by the National Marine Sanctuary Program headquarters office. Representatives from thirteen of the NMSP's councils, staff from fourteen councils, and NMSP headquarters staff attended the meeting. A representative from the Makah Tribe in Washington state also attended as an invited guest. See page 9 for a listing of meeting participants and presenters.

The first day of the meeting, held at NMSP headquarters offices on April 24, was an informal discussion session with advisory council coordinators from across the NMSP. Discussion topics included: NMSP advisory council performance measure, national support updates, numerous "housekeeping" issues, changes to the NMSP Council Implementation Handbook, and open discussion time.

Wednesday, April 25 began with meeting welcomes, an overview of the agenda, and a "State of the National Marine Sanctuary Program" presentation by Dan Basta, NMSP Director. Other presentations highlighted the NMSP Outreach Strategy, Reauthorization and the National Marine Sanctuaries Act, NMSP Strategic Planning and Performance Measures, and NMSP Maritime Heritage Activities. The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation (NMSF) was also on hand to introduce the council chairs to their organization and activities. University of Michigan graduate students presented the results of their thesis project, analyzing how effective the NMSP advisory councils have been at promoting communication and collaboration between public agencies and non-agency groups and the factors that promote that effectiveness. Their research shows that the advisory councils are very effective, work well together, and provide important leadership through communication and positive working relationships. The students believe councils are working because of: (1) the people involved; (2) effective meetings; (3) adaptability and flexibility of the process, and (4) NOAA commitment and support. The day was topped off with a welcome reception hosted by the NMSF, attended by the meeting participants, NMSP headquarters staff, NMSF staff, congressional staff, and NOAA leadership.

Thursday, April 26 focused on three topics on which the NMSP provided information and held discussions with the chairs, seeking their individual, expert opinion based on their knowledge of their sanctuary, the NMSP and councils:

(1) Fishing Regulations in National Marine Sanctuaries: Presenters from the NMSP and NOAA Fisheries highlighted the need for improved coordination and collaboration concerning the promulgation of fishing regulations in our nation's marine sanctuaries. NOAA staff developed a flowchart to clarify the role of Regional Fishery Management Councils (RFMCs), sanctuary advisory councils, NOAA Fisheries Service (Fisheries) and the NMSP in this process. Real time discussion allowed the chairs to provide additional input. The chairs had also participated in a January conference call on this same topic, with the intent of them taking it back to their full councils for input.

(2) Oil and Gas, and Alternative Ocean Energy Exploration and Development: This session was added to the agenda after the five west coast councils passed resolutions about the potential threat of oil and gas exploration activities as a result of the recent passage of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. At the request of staff and chairs, the session was broadened to also include alternative ocean energy development (e.g. wind farms). Elizabeth Moore (NMSP) summarized the NMSP regulations associated with this topic, touched on the options discussed in the alternative energy options paper, and called upon the west coast council chairs to briefly and informally summarize the actions taken by their councils. Gary Lore (Minerals Management Service) provided a presentation focused on the requirement in the energy policy act that MMS conduct an inventory of oil and gas, and the status of the inventory.

(3) Acoustics Panel Presentations and Discussion: This session was requested by the chairs at the 2005 annual meeting. The following panelists provided presentations: John Hildebrand (Scripps Institution of Oceanography); Brandon Southall (NOAA Fisheries); Kathy Metcalf (Chamber of Shipping America); and Dave Wiley (Stellwagen Bank NMS). Helene Scalliet (NMSP) summarized the activities the NMSP and NOAA are engaged in on this issue. The purpose of the session was to educate the chairs on this topic and seek their thoughts and input about progress individual sites and the NMSP can make on this issue.

The Oil and Gas and Acoustics sessions were videotaped. Following the meeting, DVDs were shipped to each site to share the presentations with the larger councils and staff. In order to facilitate a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere for the chairs, only the presentations were videotaped; the discussions were not videotaped. The NMSP also committed to providing numerous documents and other information to the councils on all of the aforementioned topics, in an effort to arm the councils with the most current information to assist the sites in managing and protecting the sanctuary resources.

This year's meeting was a tremendous success by all accounts. The program has reached a significant milestone with the establishment of fourteen councils—one at every site. The next step is to mature all of the councils, and allow them to grow and evolve along with the program overall. This meeting is a critical part of the maturation process—providing opportunities for cross-pollination between councils, focusing on lessons learned, and moving towards more substantive discussions at the annual meeting. The meetings themselves have also matured from initial meetings that focused largely on housekeeping issues and trouble-shooting, to the recent meeting with a more substantive focus.

The 2007 Sanctuary Advisory Council Chair and Coordinator Meeting will be held the week of May 7 in Newport News, Virginia, hosted by the *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary.

2006 Annual Advisory Council Chairs and Coordinators Meeting Participants

Allamanda Amituana'i	Coordinator, Fagatele Bay
Lori Arguelles	Director, National Marine Sanctuary Foundation
Daniel J. Basta	Director, National Marine Sanctuary Program
Keeley Belva	Coordinator, Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale
John Broadwater	Program Manager, NOAA's Marine Heritage Program
Ellen Brody	Regional Coordinator, NMSP
Maria Brown	Superintendent, Gulf of the Farallones
Karen Brubeck	National Advisory Council Coordinator, NMSP
Nicole Capps	Pacific Region Management Support Specialist, NMSP

Paul Chetirkin	Coordinator, Monterey Bay
Marie Colton	NOS
June Cradick	Policy Analyst, NMSP
Barbara Emley	Chair, Gulf of the Farallones
Rowena Forest	Coordinator, Cordell Bank
HTC Lauvao S. Haleck	Chair, Fagatele Bay
John Hildebrand	Scripps Institution of Oceanography
Margo Jackson	Senior Policy Advisor, NMSP
Tim Johns	Chair, Northwestern Hawaiian Islands
Hoku Johnson	Coordinator, Northwestern Hawaiian Islands
Steve Joner	Makah Tribe representative
Joe Kimmel	Chair, Gray's Reef
Terry Klinger	Chair, Olympic Coast
Camille Kustin	University of Michigan graduate student
John Kweller	University of Michigan graduate student
Tom Lambert	Chair, Cordell Bank
Rachael Lillestolen	National Marine Sanctuary Foundation
Gary Lore	Minerals Management Service
Dianne Meester	Chair, Channel Islands
Arthur F. Melvin	Chair, Flower Garden Banks
Kathy Metcalf	Chamber of Shipping America
Elizabeth Moore	Chief, Conservation Policy and Planning Branch, NMSP
Jennifer Morgan	Coordinator, Flower Garden Banks
Michael Murray	Coordinator, Channel Islands
Terry O'Halloran	Chair, Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale
Paul Orlando	Senior Advisor for Strategic Plng and Prog. Integration, NMSP
Andrew Palmer	Coordinator, Olympic Coast
Bruce Popham	Chair, Florida Keys
Jean Prevo	Coordinator, Thunder Bay
Steve Kroll	Chair, Thunder Bay NMS and Underwater Preserve
Helene Scalliet	Program Analyst, NMSP
Carrie Selberg	NOAA Fisheries
Becky Shortland	Coordinator, Gray's Reef
Brandon Southall	NOAA Fisheries
Matt Stout	Chief, Communications Branch, NMSP
Deborah Streeter	Chair, Monterey Bay
Gillian Tart	Intern, NMSP
Krista Trono	Coordinator, <i>Monitor</i>
Nathalie Ward	Coordinator, Stellwagen
Donna Wieting	NOAA Fisheries
Phil Williams	NOAA Fisheries
John Williamson	Chair, Stellwagen Bank
Fiona Wilmot	Coordinator, Florida Keys

Conclusions and Future Priorities

The NMSP is approaching a “tipping period” as it relates to organizational maturity and stature within the marine conservation community. This tipping period very much encompasses our sanctuary advisory councils as well. This year marks a tremendous milestone for the NMSP sanctuary advisory councils. In 2005 councils were established for the *Monitor*, Flower Garden Banks, and Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuaries. Every site in the system, including the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve and Proposed Sanctuary, now has a sanctuary advisory council. There are almost 400 people (230 members and 160 alternates) serving on advisory councils. In 2005, councils and their working groups and subcommittees donated over 16,000 hours to the National Marine Sanctuary Program.

The NMSP has now worked with councils for fifteen years. Like the sanctuaries themselves, the councils are evolving and maturing. At some sites councils are tackling new, different, and sometimes more complex issues. At other sites, councils continue to address familiar issues in a dedicated and steadfast fashion. So what will 2006 and 2007 bring?

In 2006, the NMSP will continue to provide national level support to the councils by:

- Completing and printing the 4th annual NMSP Sanctuary Advisory Council National Report (this document, spring 2006);
- Completing and printing the third edition of the NMSP Sanctuary Advisory Council Implementation Handbook (spring 2006);
- Completing and printing the Council Member Directory (September 2006);
- Developing the Sanctuary Advisory Council Fact Sheet (2006);
- Continuing to update the intranet site for the council coordinators (ongoing);
- Continuing to update the internet site for the public (ongoing);
- Planning next year’s Council Chairs and Coordinators Meeting to be held in Spring 2007;
- Planning and conducting the quarterly council coordinator conference calls;
- Assisting sites with council charter amendments and reviews;
- Assisting sites with tracking the council performance measure;
- Assisting sites with the member selection process; and
- Providing general policy and legal guidance to the sites on council-related issues.

Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary

Site Profile

Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (sanctuary) is located off the coast of Ventura and Santa Barbara, California and encompasses 1,658 square miles of the waters surrounding San Miguel, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz, Anacapa, and Santa Barbara Islands. A fertile combination of warm and cool currents results in a great variety of plants and animals, including: large nearshore forests of giant kelp, flourishing populations of fish and invertebrates, and abundant and diverse populations of cetaceans, pinnipeds, and marine birds. The site was designated in September 1980 and began a review of its management plan in 1999.

Sanctuary Advisory Council Profile

The Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council (council) was established in 1998 to enhance opportunities for public involvement in sanctuary management and to support the process of management plan revision. The council has twenty-one voting members, ten representing various local, state, and federal government partners and eleven representing a variety of community interests (conservation, education, research, recreational fishing, commercial fishing, tourism, non-consumptive recreation, business, Chumash community and the public at-large). The council meets bi-monthly and has formed a number of active working groups, including those focused on conservation, commercial fishing, recreational fishing, education, research, and Chumash community involvement.

Major Achievements and Milestones

In 2005, the advisory council's greatest accomplishment was the unanimous adoption of a set of comprehensive recommendations put forth by the conservation working group that call for the sanctuary to begin addressing a variety of water quality protection issues. Development of an extensive water quality report that included recommendations evolved over the course of more than a year. In September the council unanimously recommended that, in conjunction with partners, the sanctuary take progressive steps with regard to water quality research, monitoring, regulations, policy issues, education and outreach actions. These council recommendations have helped inform and ramp up sanctuary efforts to develop a water quality protection program as called for in the sanctuary's draft management plan.

The council took many other important actions in 2005 representing a variety of achievements and serving to further the sanctuary advisory council as an effective change agent in the community. These additional actions and accomplishments are described below.

Council Recommendations and Sanctuary Decisions

Throughout the year the conservation working group led efforts to research the issue of water quality and associated potential threats to the sanctuary environment. Several discussions of their interim findings were raised at council meetings. At the September 23, 2005 meeting, the council voted unanimously to forward to the sanctuary manager the conservation working group's final report, (*A Water Quality Needs Assessment for the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary*). The report contains a suite of recommendations and a request that sanctuary staff report back to the council on steps that can be taken to implement the recommendations. The report includes four sets of recommendations focused on: (1) water quality planning; (2) research and monitoring; (3) regulatory and policy issues; and (4) education and outreach. The entire

report, including all four sets of recommendations, can be found at: <http://www.channelislands.noaa.gov/sac/news.html>. Since receiving these recommendations in September 2005, the sanctuary has been working closely to incorporate the council's advice into an emerging framework and process plan for developing a sanctuary water quality program.

The council unanimously adopted a series of recommendations received from its research activities panel (RAP) working group concerning how to maintain and improve biological monitoring programs for marine protected areas (MPAs) within the sanctuary. The recommendations were based on a detailed review of the 2004 Channel Islands Marine Protected Areas Monitoring Plan, which was developed by the California Department of Fish and Game. These recommendations were subsequently shared with the NMSP and other agencies and organizations involved in MPA monitoring activities at the Channel Islands. In ongoing efforts to coordinate various monitoring programs, pool resources, and prioritize actions, the sanctuary and partners draw on the council/RAP advice and turn to them for additional assistance in planning and program reviews.

The council sent a letter encouraging the NMSP to retain the services of the Lake Renegade Seawolf aircraft stationed at the sanctuary. The letter was in response to reports that a removal from service of that NOAA aircraft might take place. Neither NOAA's Marine and Aviation Operations Center nor the NOAA Aircraft Operations Center have moved to recall the aircraft from CINMS.

The council adopted a resolution of support for the Collaborative Marine Research Program, a program funded through the Channel Islands Marine Sanctuary Foundation that brings together fishermen and scientists to collaborate on research projects within the sanctuary (see www.cisanctuary.org/cmrap/index.htm). The council resolution expressed support for collaborative research in general within the sanctuary, and specific support for the Collaborative Marine Research Program, in hopes that it could be helpful in efforts to receive grants to support the program.

In 2005 three marine weather buoys in the Santa Barbara Channel began to experience problems in reporting wind data. The council voiced their concerns to NOAA Administrator Vice Admiral Lautenbacher that the buoys were in need of long-term support from NOAA because buoy sponsorship funding from the Minerals Management Service (MMS) ceased in 2005. In response, the Director of NOAA's National Data Buoy Center, Dr. Paul Moersdorf, attended the council's September meeting. He assured the council that he was doing all that he could to reprogram National Ocean Service funds in order to keep the three buoys of interest up and running, but that funds were short and long-term buoy sponsors (e.g., as MMS had been) had not yet come forward.

The council sent a letter to Vice Admiral Lautenbacher expressing some concerns and a series of questions about the then pending NOAA decision on which statute(s) to utilize (National Marine Sanctuaries Act and Magnuson-Stevens Act) should a decision be made to extend the State of California network of marine reserves/conservation areas into the deeper federal waters of the sanctuary. In his response, Vice Admiral Lautenbacher thanked the council for their input and the hard work and assured that NOAA would consider the council's comments before making a decision. The NOAA decision then followed in October 2005. In essence, the NOAA decision held that if marine reserves are to be established within federal waters of the sanctuary, NOAA prefers use of the Magnuson-Stevens Act for closing bottom gear fishing via a currently pending final rule on Essential Fish Habitat designations for bottomfish along with use of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act for other closures necessary to create no-take marine reserves.

At the November 18th meeting, the advisory council adopted the following brief resolution: “In light of the recent passage of our nation’s Energy Policy Act, the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council would like to reaffirm with the sanctuary manager and NOAA Administrator our support of the existing prohibition on oil and gas activities within the sanctuary. Additionally we would like the manager to know that we remain very concerned about activities of any kind outside the sanctuary’s boundaries that could have an adverse effect on the resources of the sanctuary.” The action was prompted by a similar resolution adopted by the advisory council for the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary. In considering this action, much discussion focused on establishing that this was essentially a reaffirmation of both existing sanctuary regulations and the council’s usual concern with and need to be vigilant about any potential threats to sanctuary resources. The resolution was forwarded to sanctuary manager Chris Mobley who forwarded it to the NMSP Director Dan Basta.

In September 2004 the council adopted a comprehensive report, *Anthropogenic Noise and the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary* (available at: <http://channelislands.noaa.gov/sac/pdf/7-12-04.pdf>) that included a wide range of recommendations for addressing research needs, policy options and partnerships concerning the issue of noise impacts on sanctuary marine life. In May 2005, the sanctuary manager reported back to the council on the status of work done to implement some of the council’s recommendations and described his future plans to continue working on this issue. A summary of the response to the council can be found at the website.

Also in 2005, the council enjoyed an optional one-day field trip to Anacapa Island on January 29 and a three-day retreat to Santa Cruz Island on October 26-28. In August four members of the advisory council attended a meeting of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council in Cambria. During the joint session, council members discussed shared experiences with the management plan revision process and explored ideas for possible future advisory council collaborations.

Major Administrative Changes

Several important administrative changes were made in 2005. Ten new or reappointed non-governmental representatives joined the council throughout the year (commercial fishing member and alternate, non-consumptive recreation member and alternate, business member and alternate, public-at large member and alternate, research alternate and conservation member). Also, seven new government seat representatives joined the council (NOAA Fisheries alternate, California Resources Agency alternate, California Department of Fish and Game alternate, Minerals Management Service alternate, US Coast Guard member, Santa Barbara County alternate, Department of Defense member). At the close of 2005, six positions on the council (education member and alternate, tourism alternate, Chumash alternate, recreational fishing member and alternate) opened up as representatives were reaching the end of their terms; these seats will be filled in 2006.

Problems experienced with a letter-writing process at the July council meeting led the council to discuss and develop ways to improve their protocols for such matters (decision making protocols are available at: <http://channelislands.noaa.gov/sac/charter.html>). At the November meeting the council approved refinement of their existing decision-making protocols in a number of ways, including the following:

- For significant policy issues, non-binding “straw polls” should be taken early on to get a sense for where members are at;

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- When negotiating by consensus on a proposed council letter, use a deliberative process with those members not comfortable with a proposed action or letter to find out what would be necessary to make them comfortable;
 - Set a time limit, maybe a week or two, to have a draft proposed letter circulated in advance of meeting;
 - Determine if a decision must be made at a given council meeting;
 - At a meeting when members request changes to a proposed letter, and those changes are agreed to by the council, then in any final vote on the proposed letter those members should vote first;
 - When appropriate, establish a letter drafting subcommittee that is representative of varying viewpoints on the issue at hand to make sure a balance of perspectives is incorporated into the draft.

For Additional Information

Please visit the sanctuary's website for additional information about the council at <http://www.channelislands.noaa.gov>.

Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary

Site Profile

Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary (sanctuary), designated in 1989 and encompassing 526 square miles, protects a very productive offshore seamount on the west coast, where the combination of ocean conditions and undersea topography creates a highly diverse marine community. The Bank rises to within 115 feet of the sea surface with water depths of 6,000 feet only a few miles west. The prevailing California Current flows southward along the coast, and the upwelling of nutrient rich, deep ocean waters stimulates the growth of organisms at all levels of the marine food web. It is a destination feeding ground for many marine mammals and seabirds. The site is located 60 miles northwest of San Francisco, California.

Sanctuary Advisory Council Profile

The Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council (council) was established in 2002 to support the joint management plan review process currently underway for the sanctuary and its neighboring sanctuaries, Gulf of the Farallones and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuaries. The council has members representing the research, conservation, maritime activities, community at large Sonoma County, community at large Marin County, and education communities as well as representatives from the National Marine Fisheries Service, the United States Coast Guard, Channel Islands, Gulf of the Farallones, and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuaries. The council holds a minimum of four regular meetings per year, and one annual retreat in the summer.

Major Achievements and Milestones

In February 2005, the sanctuary co-hosted the annual Sanctuary Advisory Council Chairs and Coordinators Meeting with Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary. The first day of the meeting was held in San Francisco and the rest of the meeting was held in Olema, California at the Point Reyes National Seashore Headquarters/Cordell Bank sanctuary offices. This annual meeting is a chance for advisory council chairs and coordinators from all 13 designated national marine sanctuaries and the proposed sanctuary to come together to discuss and present the unique qualities as well as the similarities shared in serving on NMSP advisory councils. Carol Keiper, Cordell Bank NMS advisory council chair, hosted the chairs for this national meeting. She also gave a presentation on projects undertaken by the Cordell Bank advisory council, as a result of working group recommendations from the management plan review process.

In 2005 Carol Keiper received the Cordell Bank NMS Volunteer of the Year award from the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation. She also received NOAA's Environmental Hero Award. Carol donates countless hours as a dedicated volunteer for the sanctuary. As an inveterate and well-respected marine biologist Carol's dedication and expertise is an invaluable resource for the staff and projects at the sanctuary. In addition to holding the position of chair and research seat on the sanctuary advisory council, Carol helped develop the monthly Cordell Bank Ocean Monitoring Program, contributed to developing and refining database functions for research at the sanctuary, and contributed greatly to outreach and education efforts for the sanctuary.

Major Administrative Changes

In May 2005, all council members reached their term limit and a new members were selected. To accommodate a growing public interest in council, and the growing needs of the sanctuary, the council was expanded to include six voting seats and five non-voting government seats.

On September 2005, the council elected new council officers. The council and staff would like to congratulate Tom Lambert, elected to serve as chair, and Doreen Moser as vice chair for the council. Tom and Doreen are both serving second terms on the council. Tom has served on the council for three years as the conservation seat, and has been selected to serve a second term as the community at large for Sonoma County seat. Tom dedicates much volunteer time, and continues efforts to inform the council and educate the community about the research and conservation of the sanctuary. Doreen has served on the council for three years as the education seat, and was selected to serve in this seat for a second term. Doreen continues to bring tremendous insight and expertise to the council table, while representing the constituency of marine educators.

For Additional Information

Please visit the sanctuary's website for additional information about the council at <http://www.cordellbank.nos.noaa.gov/council/welcome.html>.

Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary

Site Profile

Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary (sanctuary) was designated in 1986 and is the smallest (at 163 acres) and the most remote of the thirteen sites in the National Marine Sanctuary Program. Co-managed by the local American Samoa Government, the sanctuary protects and manages a complex ecosystem dominated by an Indo-Pacific coral reef. The bay provides habitat for numerous species of tropical fish, invertebrates, and algae. During parts of the year, Fagatele's sheltered waters are a haven for threatened or endangered species such as the humpback whales, as well as the hawksbill and green turtles.

Sanctuary Advisory Council Profile

The Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council (council) was established in May 2005. The membership is designed to balance the points of view, geographic diversity and advisory functions the council will perform. Voting members include research, education, fishing/Western Pacific Fisheries Council member, ocean recreation, community-at-large, American Samoa's Department of Commerce/Environment Division, American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources, and the American Samoa Community College-Sea Grant Program while National Parks and National Marine Fisheries Services are nonvoting seats.

Major Achievements and Milestones

The council held its inaugural meeting in June 2005. Timothy Keeney, NOAA's Deputy Undersecretary for Oceans and Atmosphere was present at the meeting, along with NMSP Pacific Islands Regional Superintendent Allen Tom.

For Additional Information

Please visit the sanctuary's website for additional information about the council at www.fbnms.nos.noaa.gov

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

Site Profile

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (sanctuary) was designated in 1990 and encompasses 2,900 square nautical miles around the Florida Keys. The sanctuary supports a diverse assemblage of underwater plants and animals in coral reef habitat, fringing mangroves, seagrass meadows and hard bottom areas. This complex ecosystem that abuts Everglades National Park, Biscayne National Park and surrounds Dry Tortugas National Park as well as three National Wildlife Refuges is the foundation for the tourism and fishing based economies that sustain Monroe County.

Sanctuary Advisory Council Profile

The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council (council) was established in 1991, and is the oldest of the councils. The council has 20 members covering a wide spectrum of interests in the Florida Keys community, including boating, conservation, diving, education, Everglades restoration, fishing (commercial and recreational), local government, maritime heritage, research, tourism and the community-at-large. The council meets bimonthly and currently has three working groups: waterfront access, acroporid and unforeseen challenges working group (previously global warming). Ad hoc committees are formed to deal with one-time issues.

Major Achievements and Milestones

The spearfishing tournament working group met five times to determine the severity of impacts from such tournaments on sanctuary resources before bringing their recommendations to the full council for approval. Although currently deemed no more of a problem than other extractive pursuits, tournaments will be watched over the long term for any status change.

Council members appeared in September before the Governor and Cabinet of Florida and spoke in support of the proposed shallow water Research Natural Area (RNA) in Dry Tortugas National Park to complement the Tortugas Ecological Reserve habitat in deeper water. The Governor and Cabinet approved the proposal, and members carried the same message to the State of Florida Fish & Wildlife Commissioners in December.

In August, council members and alternates gathered at Hawk's Cay Resort on Duck Key, Florida for two days of professionally facilitated discussion and networking, assisted by the council coordinator from Gray's Reef NMS. They drew up vision and mission statements and a five-year plan to be enacted in conjunction with sanctuary staff and Sanctuary Friends of the Florida Keys.

Additionally, by good luck or good judgment or both, no meetings were displaced by Hurricanes Dennis, Katrina, Rita or Wilma which otherwise caused varying degrees of disruption and damage to members' homes, businesses and property.

With great sadness the council learned of the passing of member Major Denis Trelewicz in November, after a lengthy and painful illness. Denis's lifelong passion for marine archaeology and history culminated in his appointment to the council to represent maritime heritage interests. His dedication, knowledge and enthusiasm will be irreplaceable.

Council Recommendations and Sanctuary Decisions

A number of recommendations were made by the council to sanctuary managers during the course of the year that require regulatory changes. These (mostly increased protection for sensitive areas) call for additional Wildlife Management Areas, No Wake, Idle Speed Only areas and marker buoys to be installed. These changes will be undertaken after the revised management plan has been completed.

The council recommended that the Army Corps of Engineers conduct a Supplemental Environmental Impact Survey on the controversial widening of the 18 Mile Stretch, the road linking the Keys to the mainland, which passes through mangroves, sawgrass and cypress hammocks. The current roadbed interrupts tidal flow between two basins, inhibiting exchange of water and larvae.

Recommendations from the council were forwarded by the Superintendent to the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission concerning permit bag and vessel limits, in response to wholesale harvesting of spawning aggregations on artificial reefs by recreational fishermen in sanctuary waters; recommendations also went forward concerning limited entry into the marine life fishery in Florida.

Major Administrative Changes

A State partner, Kacky Andrews, left the directorship of the Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas of Florida Department of Environmental Protection to become the Executive Director of Coastal States Organization, a non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C. Kacky was replaced by Stephanie Bailensen formerly of NOAA. Kacky represented the state at council meetings.

Van Fischer of U.S. Fish & Wildlife joined non-voting agency representatives at council meetings. He is with the National Wildlife Refuges program in the Florida Keys.

Lee Lapid became the Executive Director of Sanctuary Friends of the Florida Keys, a non-profit group that works with council members on education and outreach projects and supports council activities and events.

For Additional Information

Please visit the sanctuary's website at <http://www.fknms.nos.noaa.gov/Advisory Council/>.

Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary

Site Profile

Designated in 1992, the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary (sanctuary) is located in the northwestern Gulf of Mexico, about 115 miles directly south of the Texas/ Louisiana border. The sanctuary includes three separate areas known as East Flower Garden, West Flower Garden, and Stetson Banks. Stetson Bank is located approximately 70 miles south of Galveston and was added to the sanctuary in 1996 by Congress. Together, they harbor the northernmost living coral reefs in the United States.

The three separate, topographic features of the sanctuary are each perched atop underwater geologic features called salt domes. The corals of the East and West Flower Garden Banks form the basis for a complex, yet balanced ecosystem, providing a regional reservoir for shallow-water Caribbean reef species. Because of its location, average temperatures at Stetson Bank during the winter are several degrees cooler than at the Flower Gardens. Consequently, the corals do not thrive and build into reefs at Stetson Bank. Instead, this bank supports a coral/sponge habitat and rich assemblages of associated animals and plants where the siltstone bedrock can still be seen in many places. Each of the banks is a geographically separate entity, with its own set of boundaries, and surrounded by miles of open ocean at depths ranging from approximately 200 to 400 feet (61 to 122 meters).

Sanctuary Advisory Council Profile

The Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council (council) was established in 2005 to enhance opportunities for public involvement in sanctuary management and to support the process of the management plan review, which will begin in 2006. The council has eight voting (non-governmental) members representing various community interests including recreational diving, diving operations, oil and gas industry, recreational fishing, commercial fishing, research, education, and conservation. Additionally, non-voting representatives from three governmental agencies serve on the council including: Minerals Management Service, Department of the Interior; United States Coast Guard; and NOAA Fisheries, Department of Commerce. The council plans to meet quarterly or more frequently as needed during the management plan review process.

Major Achievements and Milestones

The council held its first meeting on November 9, 2005 at the NOAA Fisheries Laboratory in Galveston, TX. Review and revision of the 1991 Flower Garden Banks management plan will be the primary focus for council activities during 2006. Additionally, the council members will serve as the liaison between their user groups and constituents and the sanctuary management.

For Additional Information

Please visit the sanctuary's website for additional information about the council at <http://flowergarden.noaa.gov>.

Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary

Site Profile

Gray's Reef is one of the largest nearshore rocky reefs in the southeastern United States. The Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary (sanctuary) is located 17.5 nautical miles off Sapelo Island, Georgia. It was named in recognition of Milton B. Gray, a taxonomist and curator at the University of Georgia Marine Institute who studied the area in the 1960s. The sanctuary boundary protects 16.68 square nautical miles of open ocean and hard bottom. Although it is estimated that 75 percent of the hard bottom is covered by sand, rock outcroppings scattered throughout the sanctuary form a complex habitat of caves, burrows, troughs, and overhangs some 60 to 70 feet below the Atlantic Ocean's surface. The rocky ridges and their associated attached organisms are commonly referred to as "live bottom habitat," a habitat of particular biological importance given the extensive sands that cover most of the broad continental shelf. The rocky bottom is carpeted with corals, sponges, and other invertebrates. This flourishing ecosystem attracts mackerel, grouper, black sea bass, angelfish, and a host of other fishes. Loggerhead sea turtles, a threatened species, also use the sanctuary year-round for foraging and resting, and the reef is also close to the winter calving ground for the highly endangered Northern right whale. The sanctuary is one of the most popular sport fishing and diving areas along the Georgia coast.

Sanctuary Advisory Council Profile

The Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council (council) includes 14 members representing conservation, education, research, recreational fishing and diving, commercial/charter fishing, and federal and state agency partners. The council was formed in 1999 in support of the site's management plan review which began the same year. The council meets quarterly.

Major Achievements and Milestones/ Council Recommendations and Sanctuary Decisions

Review and revision of the sanctuary's 1983 management plan was the primary focus for council activities from 1999 through the early part of 2004. In 2005, the council focused on investigation of a marine research area concept. The council formed a working group of users, scientists, resource managers, law enforcement personnel and others to examine the idea and make recommendations to the full council. The council met in June to review the working group report and to develop final recommendations to NOAA and the sanctuary. The recommendations and report were adopted by NOAA and the sanctuary, which expects to begin formal consideration of the research area through a public process beginning in 2006.

Major Administrative Changes

Council chair and sport diving representative Judy Wright retired from the council as did vice-chair and sport fishing representative Bing Phillips. Both Judy and Bing had served on the advisory council since it was formed in 1999. In addition, Judy Wright was nominated for the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation's Volunteer of the Year Award.

For Additional Information

Please visit the sanctuary's website for additional information about the council at <http://www.graysreef.nos.noaa.gov/sac.html>

Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary

Site Profile

Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary (sanctuary) includes nurseries and spawning grounds for commercially valuable fish species, at least 36 species of marine mammals, and 15 species of breeding seabirds. One fifth of California's harbor seals breed within the sanctuary. The Gulf of the Farallones supports the largest concentration of breeding seabirds in the contiguous United States. The sanctuary boundaries include the coastline up to mean high tide, protecting open ocean and an number of lagoons and estuaries, bays and beaches for the public. The sanctuary was designated in 1981 and covers 1,255 square miles. Its proximity to the San Francisco Bay Area's human population of nearly 8 million makes the sanctuary one of the most complex sites in the program to administer. The sanctuary works to balance the needs of its wildlife resources with the needs of the public.

Since March 2004, the sanctuary has had administrative and management responsibilities, with the exception of water quality issues, for the part of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary from the San Mateo/Santa Cruz county line north to the existing boundary between the two sanctuaries.

Sanctuary Advisory Council Profile

The Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council (council) was established in 2001 to support the joint management plan review process now underway for the GFNMS and its neighboring sanctuaries, Cordell Bank and Monterey Bay. Council members represent the areas of education, research, conservation, maritime activities and the community at large, as well as the GFNMS's primary government partner, the National Park Service. The advisory council plays a critical role in facilitating dialogue between sanctuary management and the area's many and varied user groups and constituents. In addition to raising constituent concerns with sanctuary management, the council is responsible for carrying the messages, programs, accomplishments and issues of the marine sanctuary out to the groups each member represents.

The council holds quarterly regular meetings. Meeting locations alternate between the northern, central and southern ends of the sanctuary's jurisdiction. The council takes part in an annual retreat that generally includes special training. In December, the council met jointly with the Monterey Bay NMS council to discuss issues related to the northern management area, and overlapping issues. Several council members also participated in ad hoc working groups.

Major Issues / Council Recommendations / Sanctuary Decisions

In January, the council unanimously passed a resolution recommending the inclusion of Davidson Seamount into the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary in order to protect the area against future potential oil and gas resource recovery.

At the April meeting, the council passed a motion to send a letter, in conjunction with the other advisory councils, to Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez welcoming him to the program. The council also sent him a letter encouraging his support for reauthorization of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act.

In July, the advisory council addressed the issue of impacts of petroleum inventory, exploration and development through the use of seismic airguns or such equipment. The council passed a resolution requesting

that Sanctuary Superintendent Maria Brown seek a formal legal opinion from GFNMS counsel regarding the ramifications of adverse impacts on sanctuary resources, including those to the sensory organs of certain marine mammals, from seismic survey airgun activity. They further requested that this be shared with other relevant sanctuary program officials.

In addition, an ad-hoc working group was established for the San Francisco Exemption Area, an area which lies outside the Golden Gate adjacent to the northern part of the Monterey Bay sanctuary. This working group will work to better understand the reasons why the Exemption Area (also known as the “doughnut hole”) was created in 1991, and investigate whether those reasons still exist.

A representative from the council was elected to participate in the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council addressing Marine Protected Areas.

At the July meeting the council voted to support the Monterey Sanctuary Advisory Council request to Dan Basta that the National Marine Sanctuary Program consider separating the regulatory process attendant upon the Joint Management Plan Review from the management plan.

In December, at the joint annual meeting of the Gulf of the Farallones and Monterey Bay sanctuary advisory councils, by separate council votes, jointly resolved to encourage a legislative amendment exempting the waters of all sites within the National Marine Sanctuary System from the “OCS Inventory” contained in the Omnibus Energy Act of 2005; and that any seismic airgun surveys outside of the boundaries of any national marine sanctuary potentially affected by such surveys should be subject to the ecosystem protection objectives and consultation requirements of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act, and the affected sanctuary’s designation document and regulations.

The Joint Management Plan Review continued to be among the activities in which the council was engaged in 2005. An ecosystem protection approach is being applied in addressing areas including education and outreach, fishing activities, wildlife disturbance, water quality, invasive species, vessel spills, resource protection, and research and monitoring.

An ad hoc working group designated to track water quality issues affecting the watersheds of the Estero Americano and the Estero de San Antonio is monitoring development in the sanctuary watershed.

The council discussed other issues of concern such as motorized personal watercraft, the Mavericks Surf Contest in the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

Major Administrative Changes

The council revisited an earlier proposal that the advisory council charters for the Farallones and Monterey sanctuaries be amended to reflect the Northern Management Area and examined for similarity of language between the two sanctuaries.

Recruitment was initiated to fill expiring and newly created seats. These will bring the council complement to: two at-large council seats and two alternates; two Maritime Activities seats and two alternates; two Conservation seats and two alternates; in addition to Education and Research, with an alternate.

Three new government seats were created: 1) State Resources Agencies; 2) State Environmental Protection Agency; and 3) U.S. Coast Guard.

For Additional Information

Please visit the sanctuary's website for additional information about the council at <http://www.farallones.noaa.gov/manage/sac.html>

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary

Site Profile

The Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary (sanctuary) lies within the shallow (less than 600 feet), warm waters surrounding the main Hawaiian Islands and constitutes one of the world's most important humpback whale habitats. Scientists estimate that two-thirds of the entire North Pacific humpback whale population migrate to Hawaiian waters each winter to engage in breeding, calving, and nursing activities. The continued protection of humpback whales and their habitat is crucial to the long-term recovery of this endangered species. The sanctuary was designated in 1992 and encompasses 1,370 square miles.

Sanctuary Advisory Council Profile

Formed in 1992, the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council (council) is one of the older councils and also the largest at 31 members. Representatives cover all facets of the sanctuary community, including conservation, education, research, fishing, whale watching, tourism, recreation, shipping, business/commerce, Native Hawaiian, individual islands, the community at large, and a number of state and federal partners. The council formed subcommittees for education, research, and conservation that meet on a frequent basis; the whole council generally meets quarterly.

Major Achievements and Milestones

The council spent a significant amount of time this year working to outline its recommendations to Hawaii Super Ferry to incorporate operational strategies to minimize and reduce the risk of vessel collisions with whales. Hawaii Super Ferry plans to begin a high-speed inter-island ferry service between the main Hawaiian Islands in 2007, and there has been much concern from the community about the safety of humpback whales. The company presented to the council their policy that proposes utilizing best practices to avoid encounters with humpbacks. The council recognized that the strategies proposed by Hawaii Super Ferry incorporated their recommendations and speak to the minimum requirements for whale avoidance that they deemed appropriate with current and available technology.

In addition, the council's committees have been busy. The conservation and research committees developed a draft position paper on an aquaculture venture proposed in the heart of the sanctuary in waters off of Maui. In consideration of the committee's response, the company opted to investigate proposing an alternate site. The entire council is working to develop a better way to evaluate aquaculture ventures, as several new projects are being proposed in Hawaii. In preparation for the sanctuary management plan review, the education committee was asked to work with staff members to see what education and outreach efforts were already underway for other species such as sea turtles and monk seals. The committee worked hard to develop an outline of outreach efforts by staff that focuses on species other than humpback whales.

The council held its third annual retreat and planning session on December 1-2, at the Hawaii Institute for Marine Biology at Coconut Island off of Oahu. The entire council met on the first day to develop goals for an action plan for 2006. On the second day the executive committee (consisting of elected council officers and chairs of the committees and working groups) met to further discuss and implement action items from the previous day.

Council Recommendations and Sanctuary Decisions

In 2005, the council discussed and carried out the following actions:

- The council passed a resolution accepting the whale avoidance policy from Hawaii Super Ferry.
- The council discussed a proposal for an aquaculture venture to be located in the heart of the sanctuary.
- The council wrote a letter supporting education cruises on NOAA vessels in the sanctuary.

Major Administrative Changes

The council elected new officers in May. The new council chair is Terry O'Halloran (business/commerce), Jim Coon (whale watching) was elected as vice-chair, and Teri Leicher (ocean recreation) will serve as secretary. Each of these members has been active with the sanctuary and the council for many years and is excited to accept these new positions.

For Additional Information

Please visit the sanctuary's website for additional information about the council at <http://www.hihwnms.nos.noaa.gov/sac/sac.html>.

***Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary**

Site Profile

The *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary (sanctuary) was designated as the nation's first sanctuary in 1975 and encompasses the wreck of the USS *Monitor* off the coast of North Carolina. The *Monitor* was the prototype for a class of U.S. Civil War ironclad, turreted warships that significantly altered naval technology and revolutionized warfare at sea. The sanctuary, a vertical column of water one nautical mile in diameter, is located 16 miles south-southeast of North Carolina's Cape Hatteras Lighthouse.

Sanctuary Advisory Council Profile

The *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council (council) was established in 2005 and consists of eleven members representing the U.S. Navy, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, National Park Service, The Mariners' Museum, recreational diving, heritage tourism, conservation, education and citizen-at-large. The council plans to meet every six months, with meeting locations most likely to alternate between Virginia and North Carolina.

Major Achievements and Milestones

The council charter was signed in July 2005 making the *Monitor* the final sanctuary in the program to have an established advisory council. The member selection process was completed in February 2006. The first council meeting will be held in May 2006.

For Additional Information

Please visit the sanctuary's website for additional information about the council at <http://www.monitor.noaa.gov>.

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary

Site Profile

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (sanctuary) designated in 1992 is the nation's largest sanctuary, spanning over 5,300 square miles of coastal waters off central California, from Cambria in the south to San Francisco and Marin County in the north. Within its boundaries are a rich array of habitats, from rugged rocky shores and lush kelp forests to one of the deepest underwater canyons in North America. These habitats abound with life, from tiny plants to huge blue whales. With its great diversity of habitats and life, the sanctuary is a national focus for marine research and education.

Sanctuary Advisory Council Profile

The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council (council) is one of the oldest, established in 1994. It is also one of the largest, with 20 voting members. Council members represent such diverse interests as conservation, education, research, fishing, diving, tourism, recreation, harbors/ports, business/industry, agriculture, and the community at large, and 7 members represent local or state agency partners such as the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments, California Department of Fish and Game, California Coastal Commission, California EPA, California Regional Water Quality Control Board and the California Resources Agency. Non-voting federal agency representatives include the U.S. Coast Guard, Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve, and the three California marine sanctuaries.

The council meets bimonthly at various geographic locations throughout the sanctuary. There are four standing working groups of the advisory council: conservation, education, research and business and tourism.

Major Issues / Council Recommendations / Sanctuary Decisions

The council entered its fifth year of taking part in the management plan review process. The advisory council received regular updates about the progress of a NOAA decision concerning how to restrict fishing at Davidson Seamount, which is proposed to be included as part of the sanctuary. The advisory council unanimously authorized the chair to write Dan Basta expressing their concern with delays in the release of the management plan. NOAA decided in October that fishing would best be regulated under the Magnuson-Stevens Act instead of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act. The council is looking forward to seeing the management plan released in 2006.

The council continued to work cooperatively with the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary (GFNMS) on the area within Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary boundaries that is managed by the GFNMS. The advisory council encouraged the GFNMS advisory council to add more seats to their advisory council, with a focus on within the Northern Management Area (NMA). Both advisory councils discussed new wording for their advisory council charters to delineate who takes the lead on which issues in the NMA. The advisory councils held their second annual joint meeting in December.

At the annual joint meeting in December, the Monterey Bay and Gulf of the Farallones advisory councils unanimously passed a resolution opposing seismic airgun OCS inventory activities within national marine sanctuaries.

The council continued to work on improving relations with local governments and increasing public outreach. The advisory council adopted some of the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) proposals to strengthen the process for recommending new council members and to publish council member affiliations and current employers on the website. AMBAG Chair Ralph Rubio affirmed these changes and thanked sanctuary staff and the advisory council for their work with AMBAG. The Monterey City Council continues to express concerns about the structure and governance of the council.

The council received several updates on the sanctuary visitor center. At the February meeting, the advisory council unanimously authorized the chair to send a letter to Dan Basta expressing their endorsement of the sanctuary visitor center and their hopes that funding from the NMSP will continue.

At the August meeting, it was brought to the council's attention that the Bureau of Reclamation was proposing to discharge agricultural drainage from the San Luis Unit of the Central Valley Project into Estero Bay. Even though this area is not within the boundaries of the sanctuary, the council agreed to send a letter to the Bureau of Reclamation expressing their concerns for the ecological impacts of discharge.

Major Administrative Changes

The council was regularly briefed on the regionalization of the National Marine Sanctuary Program. The council said good-bye to Bill Douros who will now serve as West Coast Regional Superintendent, and began working with two acting superintendents in 2006.

The research activities panel completed a comprehensive self-assessment and presented a new mission statement and set of membership criteria to the council.

At the council meeting in Cambria, four members of the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council joined the meeting to participate in a discussion about administrative issues of both advisory councils.

During 2005 the following new members joined the advisory council: David Crabbe (commercial fishing alternate), Randy Herz (diving alternate), Tracey Weiss (education primary), Steve Moore (research alternate), Kris Reyes (tourism alternate), Cynthia Walter (citizen at large alternate), Libby Downey (Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments Alternate), and LTJG Jacob Gustafson (U.S. Coast Guard).

Staff and council said good-bye and thank you to long time members Pat Clark-Grey (education), Ted Balestreri (tourism), and to Meg Delano (citizen at large alternate), Jeff Paduan (research alternate) and Berkley White (diving alternate).

Deborah Streeter (citizen at large primary) served the second year of her two-year term as chair and Tom Canale (fishing primary) was re-elected for a second year as vice-chair. Katilin Gaffney (conservation primary) was elected as secretary. The council voted to change the Charter so that the vice-chair's term will be two years instead of one (as it is for the chair).

For Additional Information

Please visit the sanctuary's website for additional information about the council at <http://www.mbnms.nos.noaa.gov/intro/advisory/advisory.html>.

Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve/Proposed Sanctuary

Site Profile

The expansive coral reef ecosystems of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) encompass an array of natural, cultural, and historic resources unique to Hawai‘i, the United States, and the world. The coral reefs are the foundation of ecosystems that host distinctive assemblages of marine mammals, fish, sea turtles, birds, algae, and invertebrates. Federally protected species include the endangered Hawaiian monk seal and threatened green sea turtle, several resident cetacean species and millions of migratory seabirds. The coral reefs and lands that support these species represent an amazing biological evolution that includes one of the highest rates of marine endemism found in the world’s oceans. These diverse natural resources are complemented by the area’s cultural and historical significance. Archeological sites and artifacts on Mokumanamana and Nihoa demonstrate usage and inhabitation of the area by early Hawaiians and oral histories document continued access to marine resources into the present day. Native Hawaiian cultural access voyages to the NWHI in recent years are breathing new life into the historical connection of all the islands of the Hawaiian Archipelago. The area played a role during early European exploration of the archipelago and the Pacific whaling era, as well as a pivotal role in World War II including the Battle of Midway, considered to be the most decisive U.S. victory and the turning point of the Pacific war. The NWHI were declared a Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve by Executive Order in 2000 and are presently being considered as a national marine sanctuary through a designation process that began in 2001.

Reserve Advisory Council Profile

The reserve advisory council (council) was established in 2001 to provide advice on the operation of the reserve and the sanctuary designation process. Twenty-five members represent a broad spectrum of interest groups, including conservation, education, research, recreational and commercial fishing, tourism, Native Hawaiians, and the community at large, as well as ten state and federal agency partners. The council generally meets quarterly.

Major Achievements and Milestones

In 2005, the council dedicated a large part of its time to reviewing and developing comments on the draft sanctuary management plan and submitting an alternative to be considered for analysis in the draft environmental impact statement for the proposed sanctuary. Three two-day council meetings and one two-day workshop on the draft management plan were held. Other major achievements of the council include: providing advice and recommendations on the analysis of the reserve operations plan, providing advice and recommendations on the reserve permitting process and forming a reserve operations plan implementation subcommittee.

Council Recommendations

Major resolutions passed by the council include:

- Creation of a reserve operations plan implementation subcommittee;
- Formation of a management plan/draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) workshop;
- Comments on the draft management plan for the proposed sanctuary; and
- Development of an alternative to be considered for analysis in the DEIS.

Major Administrative Changes

In 2005, the council formed a reserve operations plan implementation subcommittee to provide advice and input to the reserve on the analysis of the reserve operations plan. The council also seated two new research alternates. Hoku Johnson was hired as the new council coordinator.

For Additional Information

Please visit the reserve's website for additional information about the council at <http://hawaiiireef.noaa.gov/council/welcome.html>.

Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary

Site Profile

The Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary (sanctuary) spans 3,310-square miles of marine waters off the rugged Olympic Peninsula coastline, from Cape Flattery south to the mouth of the Copalis River, and extending 25 to 50 miles seaward. The sanctuary covers much of the continental shelf and several major submarine canyons, and protects a productive upwelling zone—home to a rich diversity of marine mammal and seabirds, diverse populations of kelp and intertidal algae, and thriving invertebrate communities. The sanctuary is also rich in cultural resources, with over 150 documented historical shipwrecks and the vibrant contemporary cultures of the Makah, Hoh, and Quileute tribes and Quinault Nation. The sanctuary was designated in July 1994.

Sanctuary Advisory Council Profile

The Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council (council) was established in 1995 and has twenty-one members, including fifteen voting members representing conservation, education, research, fishing, tourism, marine business/ports, community at large, state agencies, local governments, and the four Native American tribes of the region. Six ex-officio, non-voting seats represent the sanctuary's federal partners (Olympic National Park, NOAA Fisheries, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Coast Guard, and the U.S. Navy) and the Northwest Straits Commission. The council meets bimonthly. The council has three standing committees – the executive committee, the resource protection committee, and the education/outreach committee, to assist the work of the council. In addition, the council has established working groups on an as-needed basis. This past year, the council authorized working groups to review the council charter, to review the draft State of the Sanctuary Report, and to review the Pacific Crossing environmental assessment on remedial actions to address the problems of unburied segments of their fiber optic cable within the sanctuary.

Major Achievements and Milestones

The council had a number of achievements this year including creating a workgroup on acoustic impacts and commenting on a NOAA effort to change current acoustic thresholds, creating a charter review workgroup to work through issues to gain majority support for charter changes, and adopting several letters expressing concern to state officials and the national program director about initiatives to relax prohibitions on oil and gas activities in and around the sanctuary. The council's effort to provide meaningful comments on the draft environmental assessment for the fiber optic cable environmental remediation plan illustrates the growing ability of the council to reach out to broader constituencies for advice and input on important sanctuary decisions. In this case the council had to quickly assemble a workgroup made up of council members representing the conservation community and the commercial shipping industry, while the commercial fishing member was able identify and recruit fishermen who fish in the sanctuary and had experience with gear entanglement with underwater cables. This group met several times and absorbed fairly technical information in a short amount of time. They produced a document that the full council adopted that provided constructive comments and suggestions to the sanctuary in deciding which alternative for remediation to adopt. The council also instituted a practice of selecting a council member at each meeting to give a presentation on the organization/constituency they represent and how they exchange information with them.

Council Recommendations and Sanctuary Decisions

In January, the council adopted the 2005 annual operating plan for the council containing the anticipated work items for the council in the coming year.

In March, the council made recommendations to the sanctuary superintendent on a set of scoping comments on a NOAA Fisheries proposed action changing the thresholds for human caused underwater noise in determining when a marine mammal “take” or “harassment” occurs under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act. The superintendent forwarded the comments to NOAA Fisheries.

In March, the council adopted a resolution of support for the 6th annual Coastal Cleanup to be held in April. The cleanup involves a partnership of the sanctuary with the Olympic National Park and is spearheaded by citizen groups, including the Olympic Coast Alliance. The cleanup annually removes tens of tons of trash from the remote beaches of the Olympic coast.

Also in March, the council agreed to sign a letter in conjunction with the other sanctuary advisory councils welcoming new Secretary of Commerce Gutierrez and urging him to visit the sanctuaries.

In May, the council took action to create an acoustics workgroup to continue to follow the NOAA Fisheries proposed changes in acoustic thresholds for marine mammals as well as other developments or proposed actions that could cause acoustic impacts on sanctuary resources.

In September, the council adopted a resolution to be sent to the Governor’s Working Group on Ocean Policy regarding concerns about possible new efforts to inventory and explore for oil and gas in areas off the Washington coast, including the sanctuary. The Working Group on Ocean Policy consists of state agency representatives who are meeting to make recommendations to the Governor on possible needed legislation and policies based upon the recommendations of the two national ocean commissions. The council also passed a resolution concerning oil and gas exploration activities in the sanctuary that was forwarded by the superintendent to the national program director.

The council convened an emergency October meeting to consider and adopt recommendations by a work group of advisory council members and others, including fishermen who fish in the sanctuary. The work group was tasked to examine a draft environmental assessment (DEA) for the Pacific Crossing fiber optic cable in the sanctuary and develop comments. The DEA addressed a range of options to address how unburied segments of the fiber optic cable would be reburied to come into compliance with the original permit conditions of the cable. The advisory council members voted to adopt the recommendations and send them to NOAA for consideration. The council reaffirmed this decision at the November meeting.

In November, the council adopted changes to the current advisory council charter and recommended to the superintendent that she convey them to the National Marine Sanctuary Program office for review. The charter changes were a product of a charter review work group as well as general comments from the advisory council as a whole.

In November, the council adopted a resolution to be sent to the Washington State Governor expressing concerns about the impacts of possible oil and gas activities, including inventorying activities, that could

threaten sanctuary resources. The Governor responded with a letter to the sanctuary superintendent stating that she would continue to oppose the efforts to override the existing moratorium on oil and gas development off the Washington coast.

The council also received briefings on the following issues:

- An assessment of vessel compliance with the sanctuary's area to be avoided over the past year by assistant manager George Galasso.
- A presentation on the "Big Eddy" project – a transboundary effort to consider cooperatively protecting and managing the ecologically important Juan de Fuca eddy that overlaps the northern section of the sanctuary and the southern part of Vancouver Island.
- A description of the National Association of Networked Ocean Observing Systems project by University of Washington oceanographer Jan Newton that is establishing a network of remote sensing stations to monitor oceanographic conditions.
- A presentation by Cascadia director John Calambokidis on the current state of knowledge with regard to sonar and other acoustic events and their impact on certain marine mammals, particularly toothed whales.
- An overview by Teresa Scott of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife of the Pacific Fisheries Management Council's efforts to identify essential fish habitat and habitats of particular concern including areas of soft corals and sponge communities with the sanctuary.
- A presentation by Roger Mowry, executive director of the Washington Maritime Cooperative on how the organization provides oil spill contingency planning and oil spill response for certain vessels.
- A presentation on possible causes of recent seabird nesting failures and die-off events in the sanctuary and the role of citizen scientists in helping to identify the phenomena by University of Washington researcher Dr. Julia Parrish.
- A description of the structure and the process of the Governor's Working Group on Ocean Policy by staff director John Hansen.
- A joint presentation by Tom Cowan of the Northwest Straits Commission, Jim Woods of the Makah Tribe, and Carol Bernthal, sanctuary superintendent on the derelict fishing gear project in the Northwest Straits and in the sanctuary.
- A sanctuary orientation cruise for advisory council members courtesy of the USCG Group Port Angeles and the USCG Cutter Cuttyhawk.

Major Administrative Changes

The council welcomed several new members including members and alternates for the citizen-at-large seat, the tourism seat, a new conservation alternate, and a new Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife member. The council also voted to continue Terrie Klinger as chair, Bob Bohlman as vice chair, and Martha Hurd as secretary.

For Additional Information

Please visit the sanctuary's website for additional information about the council at <http://olympiccoast.nos.noaa.gov/AboutUs/sac/welcome.html>.

Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary

Site Profile

Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary (sanctuary), designated in November 1992, sits at the mouth of Massachusetts Bay between Cape Ann and Cape Cod. The 842-square mile sanctuary encompasses mud-filled basins, rock ledges and boulder fields, and the gravel and coarse sand bank, which was formed by the retreat of glaciers from the last Ice Age. The bank's position at the mouth of Massachusetts Bay forces an upwelling of nutrient-rich water from the Gulf of Maine—leading to high productivity and a multi-layered food web that supports a wealth of marine life including various marine mammal species, several endangered or threatened sea turtles and sea birds, and various commercial fish species. The sanctuary is also rich in cultural resources with over 10 documented shipwrecks.

Sanctuary Advisory Council Profile

The Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council (council) was originally established in 1992, but was reorganized in 2001. The council has 21 members covering the wide spectrum of interests in the region, with 15 voting seats representing various facets of the community including conservation, education, research, fishing, whale watching, recreation, business /industry, and the community at large. The remaining ex-officio seats represent the sanctuary's state and federal partners. The council generally meets four times a year.

Major Achievements, Milestones/ Councils Recommendations and Sanctuary Decisions

The council faced challenges of organizing itself while getting up to speed on an intensive management plan review process (underway since 1998). While not reflecting a specific council action that occurred, 2005 was a formative year to stimulate council participation and engender cohesive council support.

In 2003, the council prioritized the complex array of issues identified by the public in scoping meetings and recommended the formation of stakeholder working groups to address these issues. In 2004, council members chaired and participated in 11 working groups and provided recommendations to the sanctuary superintendent for the revised management plan. The process thus far has provided agreement among diverse stakeholders on contentious issues. Many of the working groups came to consensus recommendations and the council approved many of the working groups' recommendations unanimously. In 2005, two working groups were formed: compatibility determination and zoning.

The compatibility determination working group met four times throughout 2005. The goal of the working group was "to develop a framework to assess and evaluate whether existing or proposed human uses are compatible with the sanctuary's primary objective of resource protection." To date, the working group is the only stakeholder group in the country to examine this complex issue related to the National Marine Sanctuaries Act. The working group came up with strong consensus recommendations that the council approved unanimously including the following important conclusions to determine "compatible use" of resources within the Sanctuary:

- Utilize a hierarchical approach to develop a Sanctuary Compatibility Analysis Process (S-CAP) for application to compatibility issues.

- Identify existing authority for guidance regarding sanctuary's purpose and what has been contemplated regarding types of uses within sanctuary so that information can be included in a compatibility analysis.
- Identify the roles and responsibilities of managers and opportunities for public participation throughout the development and application of a compatibility determination process.
- And lastly, to articulate a sanctuary vision. A special council meeting was held in July to address this issue, and the council agreed unanimously upon the following sanctuary vision:

The sanctuary is teeming with a great diversity and abundance of marine plants and animals supported by diverse, healthy habitats in clean ocean waters. The ecological integrity of the sanctuary is protected and fully restored for current and future generations. Human uses are diverse and compatible with maintaining natural and cultural resources.

The zoning working group was initiated due to a consensus agreement by the ecosystem-based management working group to tackle one of the most significant and difficult issues in sanctuary management (i.e. applying ecosystem-based management and zoning in a site). The working group met twice in 2005 because stakeholders believed that the management plan review process should not delay its development. As a first-step, a sub-group met once to develop a definition of "ecological integrity."

Although the management plan review process has been a challenging and time-consuming process that has required the majority of the council's attention, the council provided comment on additional issues during 2005 including:

- Liquefied Natural Gas proposal: The council recommended to the superintendent, in consultations with federal agencies regarding the possible site of offshore LNG terminals, that protection of endangered marine mammals be considered including shifting of the existing shipping lanes within the sanctuary to reduce risk of collision.
- National Marine Sanctuary Program Regionalization: The council recommended that as the regionalization moves forward, funding for the regional office should not cut into sanctuary programmatic funds.
- Sanctuary Condition Report: The Condition Report was commissioned in October 2004 to serve as a prototype for the entire sanctuary system. The report is designed as a report to the public and is not a scientific document. It is intended to serve as a companion document to management plans. This document will, with the management plans, be updated every 5 years. The council recommended that specific comments concerning the Sanctuary Condition Report be addressed to the superintendent.

Other issues addressed throughout the year included: National Marine Fisheries marine mammal program; ecosystems approach to fishery management; development of a new format for the sanctuary website and, sanctuary research and education programs.

In addition, the council had a number of accomplishments in 2005 including:

- Fifteen minute constituent reports were provided by the following council members: Regina Asmutis (conservation alternate), Peter Borrelli (education member), Steve Tucker (at-large alternate), Dick Wheeler and Sharon Meeker (education member and alternate), and David Pierce (ex-officio member).
- Participation in the 2005 Sanctuary Advisory Council Chair and Coordinators Meeting and in developing recommendations to NMSP Headquarters. John Williams (council chair) presented a case study, “The Challenges of Ecosystem-Based Management.”
- John Williamson was nominated for the Volunteer of the Year Award and attended National Oceans Week and the award ceremony in Washington, D.C.
- Susan Farady (council vice-chair and conservation seat) featured an inspiring article on SBNMS: “A Sanctuary of Significance” for the Ocean Conservancy’s Blue Planet Quarterly (Spring 2005).
- The council gave the executive committee the authority to serve as the selection committee for future advisory council recruitment.
- Regina Asmutis-Silvia, (conservation alternate) was featured in “Sanctuary Watch” the NMSP newsletter.
- The council participated in a University of Michigan survey developed by Graduate Student Research Group, which is currently looking at collaborative research management, specifically the management process and the challenges that management faces.

The sanctuary hosted the Advisory Council Coordinators Meeting in September 2005. Twelve sanctuary coordinators attended; a major focus was developing a NMSP advisory council performance measure.

Major Administrative Changes

Two-and three-year terms were established for the incoming council to avoid periodic turnover of the entire council. In June 2005, SBNMS welcomed a newly appointed whale watching member (two-year term), Steve Milliken, to the council. In December 2005, recruitment for business and industry (member and alternate) and education (alternate) was advertised. Those newly appointed seats will be approved in early 2006.

New officers were elected at the February 2005 meeting: John Williamson (chair), Susan Farady (vice-chair) and Sally Yozell (secretary). Nathalie Ward continues her fourth year as council coordinator.

For Additional Information

Please visit the sanctuary’s website for additional information about the council at <http://stellwagen.nos.noaa.gov/about/sac.html>.

Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary/Underwater Preserve

Site Profile

Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary (sanctuary), designated in October 2000, boasts an impressive array of underwater cultural resources including shipwrecks. The area contains a nationally significant collection of an estimated 160 shipwrecks that spans over two centuries of Great Lakes shipping history. The sanctuary is 448 square miles in area and is located in northern Lake Huron, near Alpena, Michigan.

Sanctuary Advisory Council Profile

The Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council (council) was established in 1997 and has fifteen members, all representing facets of the sanctuary community, including education, research, fishing, diving, tourism, cultural resources, economic development, and the community at large. Five seats represent local community governments. The council meets bimonthly, with informal coffees and lunches scheduled for non-meeting months. (Informal meetings are used for socializing among members; no council business occurs at such meetings.) Working groups meet as needed. The fifteen alternates also take an active role in council meetings as well as assist in carrying out the many volunteer assignments throughout the year. Attendance at advisory council meetings continues to be outstanding with a typical turn-out of 20 members and alternates. This attests to the high degree of interest in sanctuary issues and the dedication of the people who have volunteered to serve their community in this manner.

Major Achievements and Milestones

In 2005, the council held four regular meetings, a short retreat and also met informally six times. The informal meetings have proven to be very successful and an integral part of the council's interaction, and were shared during the chair/coordinator's meeting in San Francisco in February, 2005.

The 2005 retreat was used as an opportunity for the staff to thank the council members for their support and dedication to the sanctuary. Twenty-four members and alternates were present at this year's retreat, making it the best retreat attendance to date. During the retreat, council members reviewed and discussed the education goals and recommendations which were set by the education working group and presented to sanctuary staff in 2002. Many of these recommendations have been accomplished but there were still some areas that needed improvement or had not been addressed as of April 2005. Therefore, an education working group was formed and they will continue to work on these goals. Also at the retreat, council member Betty Krueger was presented with the 2005 Volunteer of the Year Award. As Thunder Bay's Volunteer of the Year, Betty was nominated for the National Marine Sanctuary Foundations' Volunteer of the Year Award and attended the awards' dinner which was held in Washington, DC, on June 7th. Betty Krueger was also honored at the sanctuary's 5-Year Anniversary Gala on September 17th.

One of the council's ongoing goals is to learn more about Thunder Bay's shipwrecks and resources, as well as other sanctuary issues. At each meeting, time was reserved for a special presentation. These included a presentation by council member Ed Retherford on fishing; a presentation by Luke Clayborn captain of the Pride of Michigan; representatives from the Alpena Youth Sailing Program about possible partnerships with the sanctuary; and a presentation by sanctuary employees, Wayne Lusardi and Russ Green, on the 2005 summer fieldwork.

Another regular feature at the meetings, “Sanctuary Updates” is popular with council members and the media and serves to keep the council “in the loop.” The council also receives a periodic email update from the sanctuary staff between meetings.

Constituent reports continue to be an important tool for council member involvement. Constituent reports provide a valuable way for council members to stay in touch with the segment of the community they represent and to share that with the balance of the council and the sanctuary staff. The council agreed that these reports should continue in 2006.

The council was involved in TBNMS’s five-year review process. As part of the sanctuary’s agreement with the State of Michigan, the sanctuary was required to submit a report to the Governor after five years of operation. Part of this report included a public comment segment. Therefore, during the July advisory council meeting, a public comment forum was held, allowing members of the public and members of the council to speak either in support of or against the sanctuary. Council members were all in support of the permanent designation of the sanctuary.

Members of the council participated in the opening ceremony for Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary’s new visitors center, the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center (GLMHC). The GLMHC is a 20,000-square-foot facility in Alpena, Michigan, which will preserve and highlight the maritime heritage of the Great Lakes and the shipwrecks of Michigan’s Thunder Bay. The facility will feature a maritime heritage “discovery center” featuring over 8,000 square-feet of exhibits on the Great Lakes, shipwrecks, archaeology and maritime history. During the opening of the GLMHC it was announced that Governor Granholm had signed a resolution stating that the sanctuary was permanently designated to stay in Thunder Bay.

In 2005, the council volunteered and participated in events such as Riverfest, Thunder Bay Maritime Festival, Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary’s 5th Anniversary Gala, and the Great Lakes Lighthouse Festival.

Major Administrative Changes

Alpena City Councilwoman Carol Shafto stepped down from the chair of the advisory council at the end of 2005. Carol has held the chair position since Thunder Bay’s council was formed in 1997. After formal designation in 2000, the national advisory council charter was adopted, limiting the chair to two consecutive two-year terms. Carol will continue to represent the City of Alpena on the advisory council and plans to remain active in the affairs and issues of the TBNMS.

For Additional Information

Please visit the sanctuary’s website for additional information about the council at <http://thunderbay.noaa.gov/sac/sac.html>.



